

Perilous Photography.

And now let us measure this greatest of natural bridges. The actual span of the great natural Bridge of Pine Creek, Arizona, is over five hundred feet—that is about five times the span of the Virginia bridge. Its height from floor of bridge to surface of water is forty feet less than its small brother's; but to the bottom of the stream's bed—the proper measurement, of course—it is fifty feet greater. But in its breadth—that is, the measurement up and down stream—it is over six hundred feet, or more than twelve times as wide as the Virginia bridge!

In its vast size lies the impossibility of photographing this bridge. There is no point from which the eye can take it in at once. Miles of walking are necessary before one really understands it. From the bed of the stream, half the dignity of the arch is lost behind the boulders, if one gets off far enough to see all the opening. If near enough for a clear view, then the vast arch so overshadows us that neither eye nor lens can take it all in. And the side-cliff which projects from the southeast pier—as you may see in the picture of the south arch—makes it almost impossible to find a point, at sufficient distance for photographing, whence one can see clear through the bridge. "Can't be done!" insisted the old hermit. "Been lots of professionals here with their machines, and all they could get was pictures that look like caves. You can't show through, with a picture, to prove it's a bridge, at all!"

But it can be done; and being bound that St. Nicholas should be able to show you all that photography can possibly show of this wonder, I did it. It cost about twenty-four solid hours of painful and perilous climbing and scouting experiment, and the camera did its work from some of the dizziest perches that tripod ever scaled; but here is the picture which does "show through that it's a bridge." When you look at that little far circle of light and realize that it is 200 feet in diameter, you will begin to feel the distance from south arch to north arch under that terrific rock roof.—St. Nicholas

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